



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
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Sokhary Chau
Mayor and Chairperson

Jackie Doherty
Vice-Chairperson

Eileen Delrossi
Dominik Lay
Connie A. Martin
Stacey Thompson

Curriculum & Instruction
Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, March 30, 2022
City Hall – Mayor’s Reception Room
5:00 p.m.

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Subcommittee Members Present:	Chairperson Ms. Martin, Ms. Delrossi and Ms. Thompson
School Committee Members Present:	Ms. Doherty
School Department Personnel Present:	Ms. Desmond, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Vicente, Director of Special Education

Chairperson Martin called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and all Subcommittee members were present. The following agenda items were discussed:

- 1. Update on Physical & Health Education for Athletes & Band Members**
- 2. Update on Leblanc Therapeutic Day School**

Chairperson Martin asked Ms. Desmond to address the Subcommittee. Ms. Desmond suggested starting with the update on the Leblanc Therapeutic Day School. Dr. Vicente provided a PowerPoint presentation that gave the Subcommittee an overview of staffing levels, enrollment, and programming. The presentation also included his observations and additional BCBA recommendations for improvement and next steps. The Leblanc has the following staffing: one (1) Day School Coordinator, seven (7) Special Education Teachers, six (6) Paraprofessionals, one (1) Social Worker, one (1) School Security Guard, one (1) School Clerk, one (1) Custodian, .5 School Nurse, and a .5 BCBA which totals nineteen (19) total building positions.

Dr. Vicente stated that the position of BCBA is a shared position with Lowell High School. He stated that a comprehensive review of the universal supports of the building and the program would provide the most information about the needs of the school, the safety of students and

staff, and the direction of the Leblanc School as a publicly funded 766 Therapeutic Day School Transition. He stated that as defined under IDEA 2004, transition services are "designed to be within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities." (Transition services are a district obligation from age 14-22, requiring special education staff to develop a comprehensive plan clearly articulating goals and objectives that will lead students to post-secondary activities. There are potential legal ramifications for the school districts that do not understand the importance of the transition process and have not developed transition plans that clearly articulate a post-secondary vision.) He then provided the following Programmatic Review of the LeBlanc Therapeutic Day School Primary Program Components:

- School Coordinator: The School Coordinator oversees daily operations of the building and program, provides Social Emotional supports, ensures Special Education compliance, and serves as the Instructional Leader of the building.
- 7 Classrooms: Each classroom is comprised of 1 Special Education Teacher and 1 Paraprofessional. In accordance with the UTL contract, each teacher is afforded a daily prep period, leaving 6 classes in operation at all times.
- School Social Worker: The Leblanc School has 1 Special Education Social Worker who works under the LSAA contract. The primary functions of the Social Worker include Social Emotional supports, Case Management, family and community outreach, Crisis Management, Social Skills Groups, and membership with the Special Education Evaluation Team.
- BCBA: The BCBA position supports the Behavior Analysis needs of the students through the development of data collection systems, data analysis, in class supports, coaching and modeling, and Functional Behavior Assessments. The current staff member also participates in Case Management and support for the Social Worker.
- School Security Guard: The school security guard offers behavioral supports and supports the daily operations of the building associated with school safety and de-escalation. The current staff member is a Certified Crisis Prevention and Intervention Trainer.
- Point and Level System: The school operates on a point and level system where points are awarded during each academic block of the day associated with the behavioral norms of the program. The point system is a primary data collection system for measurement of student behavioral progress.
- Committees - Data Team (BCBA Lead, Clinical Team (Social Worker Lead) and Crisis Team (School Security Guard Lead)

The presentation also included the Leblanc School student enrollment and Dr. Vicente's observations & school visit dates. He stated that an additional BCBA support was provided in the Winter/Spring 2022 in response to the concerns presented at the January 24, 2022 Subcommittee Meeting. He stated the additional BCBA support that was provided was on days when the assigned BCBA is not present (Monday's and alternating Friday's). He stated that the coverage will be revisited after April vacation. He stated that in addition to this coverage, a BCBA will be participating in scheduled staff meetings on Wednesdays. He spoke about his observations from January 24, 2022 through March 17, 2022. He stated that five (5) incidents resulting in suspension took place and that three (3) of the five (5) incidents happened in the afternoon. He stated that the current .5 BCBA was present all five (5) days the incidents occurred. He stated that after review of the master schedule the highest percentage of

behavioral needs are after lunch and that the current master schedule puts all primary academic instruction in the morning, electives in the afternoon. He informed the Subcommittee that the following supports have been provided to Leblanc School since the January 24, 2022 Subcommittee Meeting:

- Second BCBA to support days when building BCBA is at Lowell High School.
- Contacts with School Resource Officer Paul Robbins.
- 21st Century After School Program funding – Program to begin 4/5/22.
- Purple Tail Farm Equine Assisted Therapy Program Visit.
- Dr. Vicente & Ms. Florence met with DESE Career Development.
- Curriculum Meeting with Melissa Newell (ELA).
- Instructional Rounds & Follow Up support meeting with Melissa Newell (ELA) and Jeff Gwiazda (Math) from the Curriculum Department.

Dr. Vicente also provided the following recommendations for improvement:

- Support Staff Review = Determination of Positional Needs
- Pedagogy & Curriculum Review
- Development of a dedicated Instructional Committee
- Professional Development
- Meeting with Administration and BCBA's regarding data analysis & review, current findings and recommendations
- Review of System Practices
- Development of a dedicated Attendance Committee
- Development of a work study program based on the Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan Model

Ms. Delrossi stated that social emotional is at an extreme high point and wanted to know if there are any supports being offered at the Leblanc.

Ms. Doherty stated that previously the BCBA was a full time position at the Leblanc and wondered why we would change it. She also asked why we would be bringing another BCBA in to cover on the half days and not leaving the current BCBA there. She stated this will need to be discussed during budget season. She also stated that she's not keen on changing it after April vacation.

Ms. Thompson agreed primarily with Ms. Doherty's remarks. She asked if any of the issues could be due to a cultural component/diversity piece.

Dr. Vicente stated that he doesn't have all the historical information. He is looking at what appropriate supports can be implemented long term.

Ms. Martin stated that this is a very small school that is very specialized and that we can't really weigh into this until the budget season. She stated that Dr. Vicente should continue his conversations with the stakeholders.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 3 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Davison addressed the Subcommittee and stated that on March 24th, performing arts and health teachers at Lowell High School met with Teen Block representative, Ruth Ogembo, to review the Making Proud Choices curriculum and collaborate around designing the performing arts wellness program. She stated that together, the teachers began to plan a map for covering the health curriculum in performing arts classes, integrating each concept and idea into the corresponding dance, show choir, and band units of study. Ms. Rothchild, then spoke about the physical education requirements for athletes. She stated that Massachusetts law on physical education, which is contained in MGL Chapter 71, Section 3 states that "physical education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades for all students in the public schools for the purpose of promoting the physical well-being of students." Schools are required to teach physical education as a required subject for all students in all grades, but have the authority to determine the hours of instruction for physical education, as they do for all other subjects of instruction (Driscoll, 2000). She stated that in accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), "physical education and health education classes are considered to be part of this structured learning time. Students' practice time in a sport, whether it is school sponsored, intramural, extracurricular, or in private lessons, is not considered "structured learning time" for purposes of the regulations". She stated that the high school recognizes the physical demands on our student athletes and remain engaged in ways in which they can provide more opportunity and flexibility to students, specifically in the upper grades around choice in a comprehensive health and wellness program. She stated that the district recently hired a Physical Education Department Chair and he is working in conjunction with our Health Department Chair to assess and refine curriculum maps for P.E. 1 - 4, to ensure that all freshmen have access to Physical Education 1, and that an additional choice is made available in grades ten (10) through twelve (12) as students' progress towards their path to graduation.

Ms. Delrossi asked if health classes would be eliminated.

Ms. Rothchild responded no and that students will have a choice.

Ms. Daviso stated that all components of Health A & B will be covered and would like to come back with a finished product.

Ms. Martin apologized for running out of time and that they had to rush through the information. She stated that the Subcommittee will be brought back in two (2) weeks to continue the conversation.

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to adjourn at 6:02 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 3 yeas
APPROVED**

Respectfully submitted,



Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer
for Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent and
Secretary, Lowell School Committee

RAD/mes

